

## Message Text

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60

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
----- 021519

R 261505Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 456

INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 2578

EXDIS

SECRETARY FROM ROBINSON

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EGEN, EAID, OVIP (ROBINSON, CHARLES W.)

SUBJECT: MISSION REPORT: ZAIRE

SUMMARY: MY VISIT PROVED TO BE VERY TIMELY IN CONVEYING ASSURANCE OF U.S. SUPPORT IN AN HOUR OF NEED AND IN GIVING MOBUTU A POLITICAL ASSET TO USE ON BOTH DOMESTIC AND ANGOLAN FRONTS MY CLOSE EXAMINATION OF TWO STALLED PROJECTS OF GREAT ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL IMPORTANCE TO ZAIRE-US RELATIONS WILL HELP ME DEVELOP SOLUTIONS TO THEIR DIFFICULTIES. CLOSER COOPERATION BY ZAIRE WITH US IN CIEC APPEARS ASSURED. END SUMMARY.

1. MY VISIT TO ZAIRE, EXTENDED TO SIX DAYS, WAS USED BY MOBUTU AND HIS GOVERNMENT AT ALL LEVELS AS A DEMONSTRATION OF TIMELY U.S. SUPPORT. THEY WENT TO UNUSUAL LENGTHS TO FOCUS PUBLIC ATTENTION ON MY PRESENCE, MY GENERAL EXPRESSIONS OF U.S. STEADFASTNESS, AND THE IMPLICATIONS OF MY VISIT IN THE AFTERMATH OF SHARED SET-BACKS IN ANGOLA. PRIVATELY, MOBUTU PORTRAYED ZAIRE AS THREATENED BY "RED" REGIMES ON OR NEAR SOME OF ITS BORDERS AND BY POTENTIAL NEW SOVIET-CUBAN ADVENTURES IN POLITICALLY SOFT TERRAIN TO THE SOUTH. HE DID NOT DETAIL HIS FEARS, BUT OUR EMBASSY BELIEVES HE IS WORRIED ABOUT HOW TO MAKE AN ACCOMMODATION FROM STRENGTH WITH MPLA RULERS OF ANGOLA AND HOW TO AVOID HAVING TO TAKE SIDES  
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AGAINST HIS ECONOMIC INTERESTS IN A NEW "LIBERATION" SHOW-

DOWN IN SOUTHERN AFRICA.

2. MOBUTU INSISTED ON ARRANGING TRIPS FOR ME VIA GOVERNMENT TRANSPORTATION AND OFFICIAL RECEPTIONS IN OUTLYING AREAS, SHABA AND KIVU, AFTER EVENTS IN NIGERIA CANCELLED MY SCHEDULE THERE. I TOURED INGA POWER PROJECT WEST OF KINSHASA, EXISTING GECAMINES AND NEW SMTF COPPER PROJECTS (THE LATTER STALLED BY INVESTOR ANXIETIES) IN PROJECTS, THE SOUTHEAST, AND AGRICULTURAL AND TOURISM CENTERS IN THE NORTHEAST. AT HIS INSISTENCE, MY DELEGATION FLEW DIRECTLY FROM KIVU TO EGYPT IN ZAIRE MILITARY C-130.

3. MOBUTU, BISENGIMANA AND MINISTERS OUTLINED THREE CLUSTERS OF PROBLEMS FOR WHICH THEY WANT U.S. ASSISTANCE:

(A) SECURITY: UNITA AND FLNA DEFEATS HAVE ALARMED MOBUTU AND INCREASED HIS AWARENESS OF ZAIRE'S DEFENSE WEAKNESSES. AS REPORTED FEBRUARY 23, HE HAS A REVISED LIST OF EQUIPMENT NEEDS FOR WHICH HE ASKS SUBSTANTIAL BUT YET UNPRICED EXPANSION OF U.S. MILITARY AID. ZAIRE'S AMENDMENTS OF ROCKWELL REPORT TRANSMITTED BY EMBASSY TO STATE/DOD.

(B) SHORT-TERM ECONOMICS STABILIZATION: FACED WITH CONTINUED DEPRESSION IN COPPER PRICES AND STAGNATION OF OTHER PRODUCTION, GOZ HAS EMBRACED PROGRAM OF IMF-DESIGNED ECONOMIC REFORMS, WHICH ARE EXPECTED TO OBTAIN IMF BOARD'S ENDORSEMENT MIDDLE OF MARCH AND SUBSEQUENT RELEASE OF \$150 MILLION IN IMF CREDITS. IMF ORGANIZED INTERNATIONAL DEBT-RESCHEDULING IS TO FOLLOW. GOVERNMENT IS LOOKING TO COMBINATION OF BILATERAL AID AND SUPPLIER CREDITS TO CLOSE REMAINING BALANCE OF PAYMENT GAP. WE DID NOT DISCUSS ANY SPECIFIC INCREASE IN THE CURRENT \$60 MILLION USG STABILIZATION SUPPORT PROGRAM ALTHOUGH SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IS CLEARLY EXPECTED. I EXPRESSED INTEREST IN US PARTICIPATION IN MULTILATERAL GROUPS OF AID DONORS AND IMF-LED DEBT RELIEF EFFORT WITHOUT QUANTIFYING US ROLE.

(C) LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT: TWO MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECTS ARE IDENTIFIED WITH UNITED STATES: THE EXIM-FINANCED 1,100 MILE POWER TRANSMISSION LINE ECONOMICALLY AND POLITICALLY LINKING COPPER-RICH SHABA (KATANGA) WITH KINSHASA AND THE HUGE  
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ZAIRE RIVER POWER PLANTS AT INGA; AND THE \$1 BILLION PRIVATELY SPONSORED (US, BRITISH/SOUTH AFRICAN, JAPANESE, FRENCH) SMTF COPPER MINING AND REFINING PROJECT IN SHABA. BOTH PROJECTS ARE STALLED BY LARGE COST ESCALATIONS, THE COPPER PROJECT FURTHER THREATENED BY POLITICAL RISK ANXIETIES AND PERSISTENT LOW COPPER PRICES. I HAVE EXAMINED PROBLEMS OF BOTH PROJECTS AND WILL PURSUE REMEDIES IMMEDIATELY AFTER MY RETURN. POWER LINE REQUIRES ABOUT \$80 MILLION OF ADDITIONAL EXIM

FINANCING. COPPER PROJECT REQUIRES FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES  
BUT NO SUBSTANTIAL NEW US GOVERNMENT FINANCING.

(D) ZAIROIS LEADERS PROFESS ABANDONMENT OF THEIR  
RECENT IDEOLOGICAL EXCESSES AND WILLINGNESS TO UNDERTAKE  
PRAGMATIC APPROACHES TO REVIVING AGRICULTURE AND INTERNAL  
DISTRIBUTION. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND I RESPONDED POSITIVELY  
TO BISENGIMANA'S REQUEST FOR US AID TO HELP REDUCE GROWING  
DEPENDENCE ON FOOD IMPORTS. FIRST STEPS WILL ENTAIL  
PROFESSIONAL SURVEYS TO BE DISCUSSED WITH AI AND DEVELOPED BY  
USAID KINSHASA.

4. DISCUSSION OF ISSUES INVOLVING ZAIRE'S MAIN INTERESTS  
EXPECTED TO ARISE IN CIEC COMMISSIONS INDICATED MUCH  
LESS IDEOLOGICAL BIAS THAN FORECASTS SUGGESTED. CONTINUED  
EMBASSY CONTACTS WITH BISENGIMANA (RELATIONS BETWEEN  
DCM WALKER AND HE ARE EXCELLENT) SEEMLIKELY TO MAINTAIN GOOD  
COOPERATON ON CIEC ISSUES.  
EILTS

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